

G-16(3)/95-NGO

परम गोपनीय

TOP SECRET

Declassified with the approval of
Int. Secy. to PM.

प्रधान मंत्री कार्यालय

PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE

(एन० जी० ओ० अनुभाग)

(N. G. O. SECTION)

फाइल नं० G-16(3)/95-NGO
File No.

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(SUBJECT :— Please Turn Over)

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किस तारीख को निकाली गई B/F Date	किस क्रमसंख्या के लिए निकाली गई For Serial No.	किस क्रम सं० निपटारा हुआ Disposal Serial No.	टिप्पणी Remarks

NOTES

pages - 1-6

BRIEF FOR THE CABINET

G-16(3)/95-NW Subject: Proposal to bring the mortal remains of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose from Japan to India.

MHA have informed that the Bose Academy in Tokyo, where the mortal remains of Netaji are kept, proposes to hold the last memorial service on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Netaji's death in 1995 and disband the Academy. In view of this, as well as the birth centenary of Netaji due in 1997, MHA have stated that a decision regarding the mortal remains of Netaji needs to be taken urgently.

2. Netaji's death is an emotive issue. The circumstances of his death were inquired into by an Inquiry Committee set up by Government of India in April, 1956. The Committee concluded that Netaji died in the air crash at Taihoku on 18 August, 1945. However, Shri Suresh Chandra Bose (elder brother of Netaji) who was a member of the Inquiry Committee disagreed with this conclusion and submitted a dissenting report. In response to a demand for fresh inquiry by a number of MPs, GOI appointed a one man Commission of Inquiry in July, 1970 comprising Justice G.D. Khosla, retired Chief Justice of Punjab High Court. This Commission also arrived at the same conclusion of Netaji's death on 18 August, 1945.

3. MHA had taken the matter before the CCPA proposing that no useful purpose would be served by holding any other inquiry or by bringing the ashes back to India. On 27 February, 1991 the CCPA endorsed the views of MHA.

4. MHA's view now is that since the Bose Academy proposes to have the last memorial service this year, and we may be asked to take charge of the ashes, it would look most inappropriate to decline.

5. IB does not consider it advisable to bring back the ashes to India as there is no demand from any quarter for this. IB feels that if the ashes are brought back the people of West Bengal are likely to construe it as an imposition on them of the official version of Netaji's death.

6. MEA have suggested that in view of the widespread sentiments that Netaji's birth centenary in 1997 should be befittingly commemorated, the ashes should be brought back to India with respect and honour.

7. The Committee of Secretaries which considered the matter on 20.7.94 saw no advantage in taking a decision at this stage since the birth centenary was due only in 1997. COS has felt that the temple management may be persuaded to continue with the upkeep of the ashes and, if necessary, maintenance charges being paid to the temple may be suitably increased to meet the increased cost.

The conclusions of the COS were placed before PM who desired that MHA could bring a paper on the subject for Cabinet's consideration.

8. MHA have sought directions of the Cabinet on whether:-

(a) The management of the Renkoji Temple in Japan be persuaded to continue to keep the ashes (with enhanced upkeep charges)

or

(b) Whether GOI should take possession of the ashes now and bring them to India

or

(c) Whether GOI should take possession of the ashes now and should keep the ashes in the Indian Mission in Tokyo.

9. MHA have stated that a favourable public opinion will need to be created in case a decision is taken to bring the ashes back to India. For this purpose it would be necessary to take the members of Netaji's family into confidence by convincing them as to the genuineness of the ashes. MHA are hopeful that if reasonably approached there is a good chance that the family members may drop their opposition. The question of an appropriate memorial for the mortal remains shall also have to be addressed in due course.

10. The note has the approval of HM.

Comments :

11. Option (c) in para 8 appears to be the most appropriate course of action for the time being.

[Signature]
9/c (N.K. Sinha)
7.2.1995

PM

Principal Secretary to PM

HSR
R
8/2

P. M. O. (NGO)
Dy. No. 31/T/95
Date 8-2-95

18-TS/JS(N)/95
7-2-95

INTERNAL / TOP SECRET

1. Reference the letter to PM from Shri Ashis Ray about Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose's ashes. Copies of the letter have also been sent to the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, CM, West Bengal, the President of the Janata Dal and the General Secretary of the Forward Bloc.

2. The main points made in Shri Ray's letter are :-

- i) The two GOI investigations into the circumstances of Netaji's death failed to convince;
- ii) It would be appropriate if Netaji's ashes presently in the Renko-ji temple in Tokyo are brought back to India;
- iii) The Japanese Government report on the investigation into the plane crash of 1956, handed over to the GOI, be made public;
- iv) The details of the Russian Government's note of January 1992 to the Indian Government about Netaji also be made public;
- v) The British Government be asked whether it had changed its mind on its view in the 1940's that Netaji did not die in the plane crash;
- vi) The urn presumed to contain Netaji's ashes, be x-rayed to verify whether or, it contains a gold-plated tooth, which might confirm the authenticity of the ashes, in conjunction with Netaji's dental record, if available;

3. In connection with an earlier similar letter from Shri Ray we had obtained information available with MEA on some of these points. Based on that information the following comments are put up for considerations :-

- i) As to the GOI investigations not being convincing, it may be pointed out the Cabinet had accepted the conclusions of the two Inquiry Committees of 1956 and 1970, that Netaji died in the air-crash in August 1945;

It would also be recalled that in February 1991, the CCPA had approved that no useful purpose would be served by holding yet another inquiry or by bringing the ashes into India. Subsequently, in August 1992 PM had approved that the inquiry into the question of whether Netaji is dead or alive, or the circumstances of his disappearance need not be reopened.

- ii) In September 1994 PM had directed MHA to bring a paper for Cabinet's consideration on Netaji's death and the possibility of bringing his ashes to India, keeping in view that Netaji's birth centenary would be in January 1997. The Cabinet considered a paper on this subject in February 1995, and deferred a decision.
- iii) The MEA does not have any Japanese report on their investigation into Netaji's death;
- iv) In January 1992, the Russian Government confirmed to our Embassy in Moscow that "as per data available in the Central and Republic Archives there is no information about the stay of the former President of the Indian National Congress Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose in the Soviet Union in 1945 and after that".

Unless we are in a position to make public other documents from other countries, it would seem inappropriate to release only information received from the Russian Government;

- v) MEA has no records of the British Government stand, as reported by Shri Ray, in the late 1940's that Netaji did not die in the plane crash;
- vi) As to the point about the urn containing the ashes, MEA had reported earlier the urn has never been x-rayed. There are some discrepancies about the dates on which the ashes believed to be Netaji's, were seen by Col Habibur Rahman, Netaji's ADC. His two separate dispositions refer to a small piece of gold being seen among the ashes;

4. It may be mentioned that it has been decided to establish a National Committee to commemorate Netaji's birth centenary and the Department of Culture has been asked to formulate a proposal for this.

5. Submitted for information.

Sujata Mehta
(Sujata Mehta)
Director
17.8.95

58-TS/Mos(PMo)/95
21.8.95
191/TS/h. Secy. to PM/95
17/8
JS(M)

JS. (M)'S OFFICE
DY. No. 7-143/95
Date 17/8

P. M. O. (NGO)
Dy. No. 207/T/95
17-8-95

110-TS/JSN/95
17-8-95
332/Dir(S)/TS/95
17-8-95

JS(M)
Principal Secy
Mos(PMo)

Genon
17/8/95
Amr
17/8/95
Anwar
18/8/95

Behal
22/8

P.M. wishes to discuss this issue with
EARL and HRT.
HOS
Behal
28/8
4/9/95
Dir(S)
NGO

TOP SECRET

Internal

Reference the letter to PM from the Home Minister about Netaji's ashes.

2. HM has referred to MHA having taken a note to the Cabinet on this subject in February 1995 and mentions that the Cabinet while deferring a decision on the subject, decided that MHA may examine the dependability of arrangements for maintaining the ashes in Japan, and draw up a contingency plan in this regard.

3. HM mentions MHA has received the following comments from MEA :

- i) Netaji's ashes are housed in the Renkoji Temple in Tokyo, Japan.
- ii) The Japanese Foreign Office has enquired several times whether there is any proposal to shift the ashes to India but this appears to be more by way of enquiry than suggestion.
- iii) The pressure for shifting the ashes from Japan to India is mainly from Netaji's old associates who are ageing and feel a personal sense of responsibility for the ashes. The priest of the temple however has stated he has no problem in continuing to look after the ashes. While any precipitate action to move the ashes is not warranted, the annual GOI donation to the temple for upkeep of the ashes could be raised from Yen 600000 to Yen 1 million.
- iv) In regard to the contingency plan, MEA had proposed to MHA that in the event the ashes are to be moved from the temple, but not to India, the only possible location to house these would be the strong room of the Indian Mission in Tokyo.

4. HM has therefore, proposed that PM may wish to instruct that the status quo in the matter be maintained till public opinion in India favours bringing back the ashes.

32-5/TS/K Secy to PM/95
24-11-95

90-TS/MOS(PMO)/95
24-11-95

TS 359 PM/95

S. No. 28/C

Flag B
S. No. 2/c

5. In this connection it may be recalled that EAM had brought to PM's notice his discussion with Netaji's widow and daughter in Germany in October 1995. EAM had mentioned to Netaji's family that GOI is keen to bring the ashes back at a suitable time provided the controversies surrounding this issue are resolved to the satisfaction of all concerned. In response to the queries of Mrs. Bose and Prof. Pfaff about what may be done with Netaji's ashes once they are brought back to India i.e. whether they would be immersed in the Ganga and or are to be kept in a place of reverence, EAM said these issues could be sorted out by the National Committee to commemorate Netaji's birth centenary. Netaji's daughter Prof. Pfaff had also agreed to be a member of the National Committee.

6. Prof. Pfaff and her husband are expected to visit India in December 1995 or early January 1996. Prof. Pfaff also told EAM that while she would like to consult other members of the family in India about the ashes, a final decision would be taken by her, though she expected opposition from some members of the family.

7. EAM's assessment is that by initiating direct contact with Netaji's immediate family, some forward movement on this issue has been made. However, opposition from a section of Netaji's family exists, whose public articulation may be used for partisan political ends, and therefore, caution would continue to be required.

X | 8. It is for consideration that in view of the Cabinet decision of February 1995 and the communications from EAM and HM, the present position in regard to Netaji's ashes could be maintained.
Y | The suggestion to increase GOI's donation to the Renkoji Temple could be processed by MEA. Developments in the National Committee, which is to meet later this month, on the issue of the ashes, could guide the further direction of action.

Sujata Mehta
(Sujata Mehta)
Director
21.11.1995

JS(M)

JS. (M)'S OFFICE
DY. No. 7-222/95
Date 22/11/95

PM had, in August this year, wished to discuss this matter with EAM and HRM (noting at flag 'C' below). Ps(D) to PM may please see for PM's further instructions in the matter.

P. M. O. (NGOI)
Dy. No. 377/T/95
Date 21-11-95
395/Dir(S)/TS/95
21/11/95
Conveyed to MHA and MHA
NGO
24/11

2
Genon
21/11/95
29/11/95
Dir(S)
PM has conversed with 'X' & 'Y' 24/11

Correspondence

Sl. No. 1-5

pages 1-22

S.No.1(I)

①

TOP SECRET

PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE

Attached herewith is a copy of a letter dated 11th August 1995 to PM from Shri Ashis Ray regarding Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose's "ashes". Also attached is a background note on the subject.

2. PM would wish to discuss this matter with EAM and Minister for Human Resource Development who may kindly see.

[Prabhakar Menon]
Joint Secretary to PM
5.9.1995

o/c

(Separate copies)

Hon'ble External Affairs Minister

Hon'ble Human Resource Development Minister

Copy to PS(D) to PM.

PMO ID Note No. G-16(3)/95-N&O dtd. 5.9.1995.

Issued
(with Encls.)
8/9/95

P. M. O. INGOI

Dy. No.

244/T/95

Date

5-9-95

J.S. (M)'S OFFICE

DY. No. 1

Date

158/95
5/9

p 3-4/n

PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE

- 1) The Cabinet had accepted the conclusions of the two Inquiry Committees of 1956 and 1970 that Netaji died in the air-crash in August 1945;

In February 1991, the CCPA had approved that no useful purpose would be served by holding yet another inquiry or by bringing the ashes into India.

- 2) In September 1994 PM had directed MHA to bring a paper for Cabinet's consideration on Netaji's death and the possibility of bringing his ashes to India, keeping in view that Netaji's birth centenary would be in January 1997. The Cabinet considered a paper on this subject in February 1995, and deferred a decision. (A copy of the note for the Cabinet is attached.)
- 3) The MEA does not have any Japanese report on their investigation into Netaji's death;
- 4) In January 1992, the Russian Government confirmed to our Embassy in Moscow that "as per data available in the Central and Republic Archives there is no information about the stay of the former President of the Indian National Congress Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose in the Soviet Union in 1945 and after that".

- 5) MEA has no records of the British Government stand, as reported by Shri Ray, in the late 1940's that Netaji did not die in the plane crash;
- 6) As to the point about the urn containing the ashes, MEA had reported earlier that the urn has never been x-rayed. There are some discrepancies about the dates on which the ashes believed to be Netaji's were seen by Col Habibur Rahman, Netaji's ADC. His two separate dispositions refer to a small piece of gold being seen among the ashes;

(It may be mentioned that it has been decided to establish a National Committee to commemorate Netaji's birth centenary and the Department of Culture has been asked to formulate a proposal for this.)

ASHIS C. RAY

F-162 Malcha Marg
New Delhi - 110021.

11 August, 1995.

TO:

Prime Minister Narasimha Rao
Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, leader of the opposition
Shri Jyoti Basu, Chief Minister of West Bengal
Shri S. R. Bommai, President of Janata Dal
Shri Chitta Basu, General Secretary of Forward Bloc

FROM:

Ashis Ray

SUBJECT: NETAJI SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE'S "ASHES"

On 18 August next, it will be half a century since - from various accounts - Netaji met with a plane crash at Taihoku and died as a result of it. And his "mortal remains" were taken to Tokyo and kept at this city's Renko-ji temple, where they remain till date.

During the past 7-8 years, I have attempted with a completely open mind to seek an answer to the question: what happened to Netaji? I have done so because, as you know, he was my grand-uncle and I have been very close to his wife and daughter. I also felt that we owe it to the Indian people - who have been so generous in their adulation of him - that we give them a satisfactory explanation on the matter. Indeed, it is sad that neither Indian authorities nor my older relatives have taken the issue seriously enough.

The two investigations ordered by the Government of India, unfortunately failed to do a convincing job. Besides, Morarjee Desai, as Prime Minister of India in September 1978, virtually rejected their findings in a statement to this effect in the Lok Sabha.

As for members of the Bose family, people have either emotionally and without any basis refused to accept the plane crash story or have endorsed it without bothering to get to the bottom of the affair.

There are also some followers of Netaji who, either because of being unaware of new evidence/information or otherwise, refuse to believe that he died as a result of the air tragedy.

I do not wish to blame anyone for the situation we face. But to appeal to all to come together in a rational manner to find a way out of it. I am sure all of you will agree that if indeed the "ashes" at the Renko-ji temple belong to Netaji, they should be brought back to India with state honour and disposed off on a befitting way.

In course of my personal probe, I have visited the Public Record Office in London, the son of Colonel Habibur Rahman in Pakistan, met government officials in Germany and Japan and made enquiries in the Soviet Union/Russia. Based on these, I have reached the following conclusions:

J.S. (N)'S OFFICE

DY. No. 3030
DATE 14.8.95.

2279/PM/1M/95
12/8

J.S. M'S OFFICE

Dy. No. 3777/95
DATE 14/8/95

3850/21/8/95
19/8

P. M. O. (NGO)

Dy. No. 365/8/95
DATE 16-8-95

May kindly examine
and submit for
PM's consideration

on file please

no please

fun
14-8

Pat/NGO

fun (S)

~~IS (A)~~

14/8/95

Rejoice

12/8

MHA matter?

I think this could be
more appropriately dealt with
on MEA side
~~12/8~~ 14/8

Is (✓)

12/8/95

2

5

a) that the Japanese government carried out an investigation into the plane crash in 1956 - a copy of this report, which confirmed that Netaji died as a result of it and that the "ashes" at the Renko-ji temple were his, was handed over to the Indian government, but remains for no reason marked "TOP SECRET" till date and, according to Justice G. D. Khosla, was never presented before his Commission;

b) that the Russian government conveyed to the Indian government in January 1992 that Netaji never visited the Soviet Union in 1945 or thereafter;

c) that there are some British government files pertaining to Netaji at the Public Record Office in London which have been sealed for extraordinary periods as opposed to being de-classified after 30 years, but can be revealed under certain conditions to either the Government of India or to a relative of Netaji;

d) that Colonel Habibur Rahman never deviated from his claim that Netaji died as a result of the crash and, according to his son, Naeemur Rahman, died disappointed about the fact that some people in India disbelieved his account and questioned his motive;

e) that Colonel Habibur Rahman was of the view that the aircrash was as a result of sabotage by Chinese technicians aimed at officers of Japanese armed forces travelling on the flight in the still hostile war atmosphere; and

f) that he put a gold-plated tooth belonging to Netaji, given to him by Japanese officials, after the cremation, in the urn containing the "ashes".

I would, therefore, request that the steps listed below be kindly taken:

1. the Japanese government report be made public without any further delay;
2. the details of the Russian government note to the Indian government also be made public;
3. the British government be asked if it changed its mind on its initial view that Netaji did not die as a result of the crash; and
4. the urn be x-rayed and it be authenticated if there is a gold-plated tooth in it or not and then a search be made in Germany and South East Asia for Netaji's dental records - I say this because after 50 years of dilly dallying, we need to be scientific and not sentimental in our approach.

May I add that it should be abundantly clear to any reasonable person that even if - as was suggested by some in the 1940s and 1950s - Colonel Habibur Rahman put out the story of the crash under instructions to hoodwink people about Netaji's whereabouts, he would surely have raised questions about what happened to his leader by the time he died in 1978. In other words, if anyone thinks that Col. Rahman was under orders to mislead people, it is ridiculous that he would have continued to do so till his death. He had no motive, nothing to gain from misleading people till the end.

(6)

Furthermore, I would suggest that we obtain a full and final statement from the Japanese government on some of the grey areas of ^{the}aircrash episode, including an explanation, if possible, on why the cremation certificate was not in Netaji's name.

It is not necessary to go into the expense and paraphernalia of another Commission. All it requires is common sense and a will to close the messy chapter once and for all.

Needless to mention, there are almost irrefutable indications that Netaji died consequent to the plane crash and that the "mortal remains" at the Renko-ji temple are his. But I do not intend to thrust ~~these~~ upon anybody. All I urge is that we try and reach a national consensus and pay due respect to a departed soul - arguably one of the outstanding sons of India.

And I should like to emphasise that in making the proposal I am I seek no publicity for myself. Only, if desired, I am prepared to work behind the scene to proceed in the matter.

With best regards,

Yours sincerely,

Am. h. 7

Cabinet Document No

COPY NO. 20

No. I/12014/27/93-IS.(D.III)
92--95 MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRSNOTE FOR THE CABINET

G-16(3)/95-NGO

Subject:- Proposal to bring the mortal remains of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose from Japan to India.

The mortal remains of Netaji are now kept in the Bose Academy in Tokyo. The Bose Academy members are reportedly thinking of disbanding the Academy and having the last memorial service in 1995 on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Netaji's death. Because of this and also since the birth centenary of Netaji is due in 1997, the issue of what action is to be taken regarding the mortal remains of Netaji has now acquired some urgency. There has been wide media coverage in Japan focusing on the concern expressed by the war veterans of the Academy over the Government of India's lack of interest in taking the ashes to India. If no decision is taken in 1995, India may be asked by the Bose Academy to take charge of the mortal remains of Netaji. It would not be possible for India to refuse to take possession of the mortal remains. Therefore, a decision is required to be taken well in advance as to what is to be done with these mortal remains.

Background

2. Netaji's death is an issue surcharged with emotion. The issue of whether he actually died in the plane crash of 18th August, 1945 at Taihoku has been questioned by some individuals and organisations.

3. In response to public demand, Government of India appointed an Inquiry Committee in April, 1956 to ascertain the circumstances concerning Netaji's death in an air crash. The Committee comprised S/Shri Shah Nawaz Khan,

Suresh Chandra Bose (elder brother of Netaji) and S.N.Maitra, former Chief Commissioner of Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The Committee, by a majority of 2:1, came to the conclusion that Netaji died in the air crash at Taihoku (Taiwan) on 18th August, 1945. Shri Suresh Chandra Bose disagreed with this conclusion and submitted a dissenting report. Although the report of the Committee was considerably devalued by Shri Suresh Chandra Bose's dissent, the majority report was accepted by the Government.

4. The controversy over the disappearance of Netaji persisted. Rumours about Netaji's survival and subsequent disappearance kept cropping up. In response to a demand for fresh inquiry by a number of MPs belonging to different political parties, the Government of India appointed a one-man Commission of Inquiry in July, 1970. Justice G.D.Khosla, retired Chief Justice of Punjab High Court, was asked to "inquire into all the facts and circumstances relating to disappearance of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose and make a report to the Central Government". The Commission visited Japan, Burma, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, South Vietnam and Taiwan and examined 224 witnesses (including 100 examined abroad). A large number of files and documents produced before the Commission were examined. The Commission arrived at the same conclusion that Netaji died in the air crash at Taihoku on 18th August, 1945. The Cabinet considered this report and accepted the findings. The report of the Commission, alongwith the Memorandum of Action taken thereon was laid on the Table of both the Houses of Parliament on 3rd September, 1974.

5. Shri Samar Guha moved a motion in Lok Sabha on 3rd August, 1977 urging Government to set up a three-man Commission for conducting a fresh inquiry into the mystery of the disappearance of Netaji. The discussion on the motion was inconclusive. It was, however, found that the point raised by Shri Guha in his speech in the House had been fully examined in the Home Ministry in the

context of the Khosla Commission's findings and no fresh grounds requiring further investigation by a new Commission had been advanced by him. The matter was, therefore, placed before the CCPA with the following proposals:-

"The issue of Netaji's death and bringing of ashes to India is surcharged with emotion. We have already had two enquiries on the disappearance of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose. It has already been accepted that Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose died in the air crash on 18th August, 1945 at Taihoku. The Ministry of Home Affairs are, therefore, of the view that no useful purpose would be served by holding yet another enquiry or/by bringing the ashes back to India at present as this might create unnecessary tensions."

The CCPA approved the proposal on 27th February, 1991 and the matter was laid at rest.

6. Since then, as mentioned earlier, the question of Netaji's mortal remains has assumed urgency. If no decision is taken by 1995, in which year the Bose Academy proposes to have the last memorial service, India may be asked by Renkoji temple to take charge of the urn containing the ashes whereby we may have no alternative but to store them in our Mission in Tokyo. It would look most inappropriate if we decline to take charge of the ashes.

Views of MEA and IB

7. The Ministry of Home Affairs has obtained the views of MEA and IB. IB's views are to the effect that it would not be advisable to take any initiative to bring back the ashes to India as there is no demand from any quarter for this. If the ashes are brought to India, the People of West Bengal are likely to construe it as an

imposition on them of the official version of Netaji's death.

8. MEA has suggested that in view of the wide-spread sentiments that Netaji's birth centenary in 1997 should be befittingly commemorated, the ashes should be brought back to India with due respect and honour. This action would form part of the full public recognition of his role and contribution to India's independence. MEA suggested the following course of preparatory action:-

- (i) Promotion of consensus in favour of burying the controversy and bringing back the ashes from Japan--respected public figures and others to be discreetly encouraged to make statements, including in Parliament, requesting the Government to bring back the ashes; or
- (ii) alternatively, establishment of a Committee to commemorate Netaji's birth centenary with participation of public figures of various political opinions, who would give the call for bringing back the late leader's ashes to India.

Consideration of the Committee of Secretaries

9. In view of what has been mentioned in foregoing para 6, a decision will have to be taken soon. There seems to be no scope for doubt that he died in the air crash of 18th August, 1945 at Taihoku. Government of India has already accepted this position. There is no evidence whatsoever to the contrary. If a few individuals/organisations have a different view, they seem to be guided more by sentimentality rather than by any rational consideration. The belief of these people that Netaji was alive and out of contact with any Indian, but would appear when found necessary, has also lost

11

relevance by now. In view of the aforesaid facts, Government of India will have to take a decision in principle. The strategy and the modalities could be worked out thereafter.

10. The matter relating to the ashes of Netaji alongwith other connected issues was, therefore, placed before the Committee of Secretaries. The directions of the Committee of Secretaries were sought on the following issue related to the ashes:-

The birth centenary of Netaji is proposed to be celebrated in a big way in India in 1997. The Bose Academy in Japan is insisting that the Government of India take possession of the mortal remains of Netaji. A decision has to be taken whether the ashes should be brought to India or stored in our Mission in Tokyo."

11. During the course of discussions, the Committee of Secretaries observed that:

- (a) The Bose Academy had not issued an ultimatum regarding the handing over of the ashes but merely made a representation on the grounds that its members were rapidly aging and may not be able to discharge their present duties; and
- (b) the Government of India was paying for the upkeep of the mortal remains in Renkoji Temple and the management could be persuaded to continue with this arrangement if the upkeep charges were increased.

12. In view of the foregoing, the Committee of Secretaries arrived at the following conclusions:-

"As regards the question of taking possession of

the ashes was concerned, no particular advantage lay in taking a decision on this at this juncture since the birth centenary was due only in 1997. Therefore, a view could be taken in the matter in 1996-97 and till such time status quo should be maintained. The temple management may be persuaded to continue with the upkeep of the ashes and, if necessary, the maintenance charges being paid to the temple may be suitably increased to meet the increased cost."

13. Conclusions of the Committee of Secretaries were placed before the Prime Minister for directions. The Prime Minister has desired that the Home Ministry bring a paper on the subject for the Cabinet's consideration. Accordingly, the matter is placed before the Cabinet for its consideration and directions on issues as examined at the foregoing paragraphs 9 to 12 and in particular on the following:-

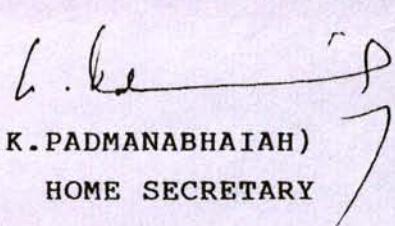
Page 4/W
G.12(18)/94
- NCD

- (i) Whether the management of Renkoji Temple in Japan be persuaded to continue with the present arrangement, if necessary, with enhanced upkeep charges or the Government of India should take possession of the ashes of late Subhash Chandra Bose, now.
- (ii) In the event of Government of India deciding to take possession of the mortal remains, whether these could be brought to India or preserved in the Indian Mission in Tokyo.

14. If a decision is taken to bring the ashes back to India, creation of a favourable public opinion will be a crucial step in the realisation of this objective. Some members of the Bose family, particularly Shri Amia Nath Bose, Netaji's nephew, and individuals like Prof. Samar Guha and members of the Forward Bloc are not reconciled to the fact that Netaji died in the air crash at Taihoku.

It would, therefore, be necessary to take the members of Netaji's family into confidence in the first place by convincing them as to the genuineness of the ashes. It should then be easier to handle opposition from other quarters like the Forward Bloc. Netaji's wife and the only daughter are at present living in Angsburg, Germany. It is felt that they can best be approached through another nephew of Netaji, Dr.Sisir Bose. Shri Amia Nath Bose, the most vociferous sceptic of the air crash story, needs to be brought around by approaching at an appropriately high level. There is good chance that if reasonably approached, the family members may drop their opposition. The question of an appropriate memorial involving the mortal remains shall also have to be addressed in due course.

15. This issues with the approval of the Home Minister.


(K.PADMANABHAIAH)
HOME SECRETARY

F.No.I/12014/27/93-IS(D.III)
Ministry of Home Affairs

- 2 FEB 1995

14
TOP SECRET

Ministry of Home Affairs
F.No.I/12014/27/93-IS(D.III)

STATEMENT OF IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

Subject: Proposal to bring the mortal remains of Netaji
Subhash Chandra Bose from Japan to India.

=====


Gist of decision required	Projected benefits/results	Time schedule or manner of implementations/reporting to Cabinet Secretariat
---------------------------	----------------------------	---

=====

Whether the mortal
remains of Netaji should
be taken possession of
and brought to India
or the status quo
should be maintained.

To forestall a crisis
in the birth
centenary year of Netaji.

To be decided as per directions
of the Cabinet.


(K.PADMANABHAIAH)
HOME SECRETARY

S.No. 2 (I)

15

~~TOP SECRET~~

MOST IMMEDIATE

PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE

In continuation of our note of even number dated 5-9-1995 regarding the "ashes" of Netaji Subash Chandra Bose, forwarded herewith is a copy of another letter to PM from Shri Ashis Ray. EAM and Human Resource Development Minister may kindly see in the context of their discussion with PM on this subject.

(Prabhakar Menon)
Joint Secretary to PM
11-9-1995

(Separate copies)

1. Hon'ble External Affairs Minister
2. Hon'ble Minister for Human Resource Development

PMO ID Note No. G-16(3)/95 - NGO

dtd. 12.9.95

Issued
12.9.95
pm
12/9

JG PM's OFFICE
DY. No. 159/95
Date 12/9/95

-: 1 :-

for
12.9

P. M. O. (NGO)

Dy. No. 272/T/95

Date 12/9/95

346/Dir(2)/TS/95
12.9.95

NGO

ASHIS C. RAY

(16)

F-162 Malcha Marg
New Delhi - 110021

5 September, 1995.

PM would wish
to discuss this
with EAM.

RW
7/9.

JS(M) EAM and HRD Minister
already advised. P1.
let me see the earlier

pps: A
8/9/95

Part II

Shri C. V. Narasimha Rao
Prime Minister of India
Race Course Road
New Delhi.

Dear Prime Minister,

I realise you are receiving conflicting signals on the issue of
Natal's remains. And I do not wish to be part of a procedure
grounding one way or the other.

I wish to submit to you that my continuing research on the subject
convince me that the best way forward is to do a test, which
will provide conclusive and indisputable scientific evidence
to establish the bones at Rajahmundry are Natal's. I am
asked as an expert on the subject; and as far as I know the
best possible proof can be obtained.

My proposal is that an international team of experts, one from
each of the countries concerned, should be formed to carry out the
test. A set of bones is drawn from the site at Rajahmundry and
sent to the team.

I have also proposed that the test should be carried out in a
neutral, third country, preferably one where there is no
political or religious interest. I would need to know the
relative and more particularly from the bones of a
person who is in the line of the basis of a claim made by Natal's
Colonel Ravindra Pantham. I carry out the test.

I am sure that you, as the author, can get the best results
from the test.

P. M. O. (NGO)
Dy. No. 412/5/95
Date 11-9-95
2584/Am/11/95
8/9

4644/JS(M)/95
8/9/95

7536/PA/95
11/9

T/ 165/EAM/95
28/X/95

S. No. 3(R)

17

TOP SECRET

OFFICE OF THE EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER

I visited Augsburg, Germany, on 21st October 1995 to meet Netaji's widow - Mrs. Emily Shenkel Bose and his daughter Prof. Anita Pfaff. Anita's husband - Dr. Hartmann Pfaff as well as their children were present during the meeting. Our Ambassador in Bonn Shri S.K. Lambah was also present. During the course of our conversation, the following points emerged;

- a) I said it was time for forward movement on the issue of return of the ashes of Netaji from Japan to India. The Japanese government as well as associates of Netaji in Japan were keen that Netaji's ashes return to his motherland. I said that the Indian government was also keen to bring back the ashes at a suitable time provided controversial issues were resolved to the satisfaction of all concerned. Anita Pfaff said that the ashes could be brought to Germany from Japan if the issue of their return to India remained controversial. Ambassador Lambah stated that the Japanese had already reacted negatively to the proposal of transferring the ashes to a third country.
- b) I showed the list of persons to be included in the Official National Centenary Celebrations Committee to mark Netaji's birth anniversary.

TS 345 /PM/ 95

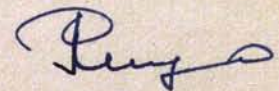
Anita Pfaff made some suggestions which I have communicated separately to HRD Minister and MOS (PMO), Shri Bhuvnesh Chaturvedi. She accepted my invitation to be a member of the Committee.

- c) Netaji's widow and his daughter raised the issue of a suitable memorial for Netaji as well as the question of what to do with Netaji's ashes once they had been brought back to India i.e. whether the ashes should be immersed in the Ganga or be kept at a place of reverence. I said that these issues could be sorted out by the National Committee.
- d) On the issue of alleged captivity of Netaji in Russia after 1945, I showed the members of Netaji's family an official communication from the Russian government stating that it has no record of Netaji's presence in the Soviet Union during or after 1945. Articles from the Russian Press pointing to the fact that Netaji was not in the Soviet Union in 1945 or thereafter, were also shown.
- e) The entire family expressed happiness over my visit. Anita Pfaff and her husband accepted my invitation to visit India. This is expected to take place late December, 95 or early January, 1996.

ASSESSMENT:

I feel that Netaji's widow and daughter are keen that an early solution be found to the issue of return of Netaji's ashes to India. They seemed convinced of the seriousness of purpose on the part of the Indian Government. Anita Pfaff made it clear that while she would like to consult other members of the family in India, the final decision would rest with her alone. She anticipated opposition from some members of the family. She would prefer that the family is not divided on this issue.

By initiating direct contact with Netaji's immediate family, we have achieved some forward movement on the issue of return of Netaji's ashes to India. However, there exists opposition from some sections of Netaji's family, which if articulated publicly, as surely it will be, may be used for partisan political ends. Therefore, we need to proceed cautiously to avoid endowing this issue with controversial overtones.



(Pranab Mukherjee)
External Affairs Minister
28 October 1995

J.S. (M)'S OFFICE

DY. No. 7-211/95

Date: 01/11/95

P. M. O. (NGO)

Dy. No. 361/T/95

Date: 2-11-95 PM

198-TS/JSN/95
1-11-95

83-TS/MOS (PMO)
30/11/95

311/TS/K. Sec. 5 Nov 95
7-11-95

L.V. N. N. N.
29/10

Phil Seay (custodian)
JSCM

Behatemesch
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A
1/11/95
JSC (S)

Am 12/11
1-11
JSC NGO

p-6/n
288/10/11 (S) TS/10/11
2/11/95
7/05 (P) TS/11/95
2/11/95



D.O.No.I/12014/27/93-IS-D III

S.No.4 (R)

SECRET

गृह मंत्री
भारत

नई दिल्ली-११०००१
HOME MINISTER
INDIA
NEW DELHI-110001

26

Dear PV Narsimha Rao,

G-16(3)/95-NAR.

Earlier this year, the question whether mortal remains of Netaji Shri Subhash Chandra Bose should be taken possession of in Tokyo and brought to India had acquired some urgency since the birth centenary year of Netaji is due in 1997. On this issue, my Ministry had taken a note to the Cabinet. The Cabinet, while deferring the subject in its meeting on 8.2.1995 decided that the Ministry of Home Affairs may examine the dependability of arrangements in Japan and draw up a contingency plan for the proper up-keep of the mortal remains and our Ambassador be specifically requested to look into these aspects. Alongside, it was decided that efforts be made for creation of a favourable public opinion, in case a decision is taken to bring back the ashes to India.

2. The Ministry of External Affairs examined the matter in consultation with Indian Ambassador in Tokyo and have given the following opinion/suggestions -

i) The ashes of Netaji seem to be housed in an adequate manner in the Rankoji Temple, Tokyo, Japan. However, according to the Japanese tradition, there is no security at the Temple against any deliberate attempt to create problems. It is perceived that any request for strengthening of security may not go down well as the Rankoji Temple where the ashes are kept, is a place open to all.

ii) The pressure for shifting of the ashes from Japan to India is mainly from the old associates of Netaji who are advancing in age and who feel a personal sense of responsibility for the ashes. Rev. Mochiziki, Priest Incharge of the temple has stated that he has absolutely no problem in continuing to look after the ashes and that he has no intention of doing anything without the full consultation and approval of the Government of India. It would thus appear that the overall situation is such that it does not warrant any precipitate action for moving the ashes. It may, however, be desirable if the contribution of Yen 6 lakh per annum donated by Government of India for the up-keep of the ashes is raised to Yen 1 Million.

iii) The Foreign office of Japan Government has on a number of occasions enquired whether in the light of the forthcoming 50th anniversary of Netaji's death and the centenary year in 1997, there is any proposal for shifting these ashes to

PRL. SECY to P.M.

DY No. 3122-S/95

Date 19/11/95

MOS (PMO)'S OFFICE

DY. NO. 1307-S

DATE 11/11/95

11/7/5/10/95

11/21

P. M. O. (NGO)

Dy. No. 545/S/95

Date 21-11-95

5407/21(5)6/95

20/11

Dis(S)

on file please

11/11/95

20.11

NGO Related files are placed below.

5-6/12



सत्यमेव जयते

गृह मंत्री

भारत

नई दिल्ली-११०००१

HOME MINISTER

INDIA

NEW DELHI-110001

21

G-16(3)/95-naw.

India. The action of the Japanese Government has been more in nature of an enquiry than a suggestion. MEA feels that the Foreign office of Japan is unlikely to take any action in the matter without consulting the Government of India.

- iv) Regarding the contingency plan, MEA has suggested that in the event the ashes are to be removed from the temple but not shifted to India, the only location to house the ashes would be the Indian Mission in Tokyo, where it could be kept in a strong room. This would, however, amount to acceptance by the Government of India that the ashes are those of Netaji. For this reason, it has been suggested that status quo should be maintained till a consensus is worked out in India for bringing the ashes.

3. In the light of the above opinion/suggestions of the Ministry of External Affairs, and in absence of any perceptive pressure either in Japan or India, it is felt that there does not appear any immediate need for disturbing the status quo till such time we are able to create a favourable public opinion in the country to bring back the ashes of Netaji to India.

4. In view of the facts enumerated in paras 2 and 3 of this note, PM may kindly consider the maintenance of 'Status Quo' in the matter.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,

(S.B. CHAVAN)

Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao,
Prime Minister,
South Block,
NEW DELHI.

Sl. No. 5(I)

(22)

TOP SECRET

(P. 61/c) LF
MHA has
already advised us to
keep this as TS
pp. 20-21/c
pp. 17-19/c

PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE

PM has seen communications from the External Affairs Minister and the Home Minister pertaining to Netaji's ashes. PM has indicated that the present position in regard to Netaji's ashes may be maintained and that the proposal to increase the Government of India's annual contribution to the Renkoji temple in Tokyo from Yen 600,000 to 1 million may be processed by MEA.

May kindly see.

Sm
(Sujata Mehta)
Director

q/c

(Separate copies)

Foreign Secretary

Home Secretary

PMO UO No. G-16(3)/95-NGO

dated 30.11.1995

207-TS/JSN/95
30-11-95

for information

P. M. O. (NGO)

Dy. No. 381-T/95

Date 30-11-95

285/Di. 2(A)/TS/95

1/12/95

399/Di. 2(B)/TS/95

30-11-95

JS (M)

JS (A)

JS (S)

JS (S)

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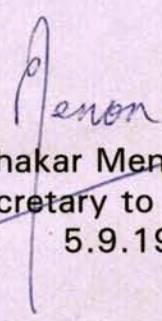
(1)

TOP SECRET

PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE

Attached herewith is a copy of a letter dated 11th August 1995 to PM from Shri Ashis Ray regarding Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose's "ashes". Also attached is a background note on the subject.

2. PM would wish to discuss this matter with EAM and Minister for Human Resource Development who may kindly see.


[Prabhakar Menon]
Joint Secretary to PM
5.9.1995


(Separate copies)

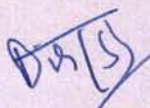
Hon'ble External Affairs Minister


Hon'ble Human Resource Development Minister

✓ Copy to PS(D) to PM.

PMO ID Note No. G-16(3)/95-NGO dtd. 5.9.1995.


6/10


DTS(S)


7.10
NGO

P. M. O. (NGO)

Dy. No. 342/11/95

Date 11-10-95

TS 330 PM/95

3721 DTS(S)/TSLSS

7/x.195

ASHIS C. RAY

F-162 Malcha Marg
New Delhi - 110021.

11 August, 1995.

TO:

Prime Minister Narasimha Rao
Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, leader of the opposition
Shri Jyoti Basu, Chief Minister of West Bengal
Shri S. R. Bommai, President of Janata Dal
Shri Chitta Basu, General Secretary of Forward Bloc

FROM:

Ashis Ray

SUBJECT: NETAJI SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE'S "ASHES"

On 18 August next, it will be half a century since - from various accounts - Netaji met with a plane crash at Taihoku and died as a result of it. And his "mortal remains" were taken to Tokyo and kept at this city's Renko-ji temple, where they remain till date.

During the past 7-8 years, I have attempted with a completely open mind to seek an answer to the question: what happened to Netaji? I have done so because, as you know, he was my grand-uncle and I have been very close to his wife and daughter. I also felt that we owe it to the Indian people - who have been so generous in their adulation of him - that we give them a satisfactory explanation on the matter. Indeed, it is sad that neither Indian authorities nor my older relatives have taken the issue seriously enough.

The two investigations ordered by the Government of India, unfortunately failed to do a convincing job. Besides, Morarjee Desai, as Prime Minister of India in September 1978, virtually rejected their findings in a statement to this effect in the Lok Sabha.

As for members of the Bose family, people have either emotionally and without any basis refused to accept the plane crash story or have endorsed it without bothering to get to the bottom of the affair.

There are also some followers of Netaji who, either because of being unaware of new evidence/information or otherwise, refuse to believe that he died as a result of the air tragedy.

I do not wish to blame anyone for the situation we face. But to appeal to all to come together in a rational manner to find a way out of it. I am sure all of you will agree that if indeed the "ashes" at the Renko-ji temple belong to Netaji, they should be brought back to India with state honour and disposed off on a befitting way.

In course of my personal probe, I have visited the Public Record Office in London, the son of Colonel Habibur Rahman in Pakistan, met government officials in Germany and Japan and made enquiries in the Soviet Union/Russia. Based on these, I have reached the following conclusions:

2.
a) that the Japanese government carried out an investigation into the plane crash in 1956 - a copy of this report, which confirmed that Netaji died as a result of it and that the "ashes" at the Renko-ji temple were his, was handed over to the Indian government, but remains for no reason marked "TOP SECRET" till date and, according to Justice G. D. Khosla, was never presented before his Commission;

b) that the Russian government conveyed to the Indian government in January 1992 that Netaji never visited the Soviet Union in 1945 or thereafter;

c) that there are some British government files pertaining to Netaji at the Public Record Office in London which have been sealed for extraordinary periods as opposed to being de-classified after 30 years, but can be revealed under certain conditions to either the Government of India or to a relative of Netaji;

d) that Colonel Habibur Rahman never deviated from his claim that Netaji died as a result of the crash and, according to his son, Naeemur Rahman, died disappointed about the fact that some people in India disbelieved his account and questioned his motive;

e) that Colonel Habibur Rahman was of the view that the air crash was as a result of sabotage by Chinese technicians aimed at officers of Japanese armed forces travelling on the flight in the still hostile war atmosphere; and

f) that he put a gold-plated tooth belonging to Netaji, given to him by Japanese officials, after the cremation, in the urn containing the "ashes".

I would, therefore, request that the steps listed below be kindly taken:

1. the Japanese government report be made public without any further delay;
2. the details of the Russian government note to the Indian government also be made public;
3. the British government be asked if it changed its mind on its initial view that Netaji did not die as a result of the crash; and
4. the urn be x-rayed and it be authenticated if there is a gold-plated tooth in it or not and then a search be made in Germany and South East Asia for Netaji's dental records - I say this because after 50 years of dilly dallying, we need to be scientific and not sentimental in our approach.

May I add that it should be abundantly clear to any reasonable person that even if - as was suggested by some in the 1940s and 1950s - Colonel Habibur Rahman put out the story of the crash under instructions to hoodwink people about Netaji's whereabouts, he would surely have raised questions about what happened to his leader by the time he died in 1978. In other words, if anyone thinks that Col. Rahman was under orders to mislead people, it is ridiculous that he would have continued to do so till his death. He had no motive, nothing to gain from misleading people till the end.

(4)

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Furthermore, I would suggest that we obtain a full and final statement from the Japanese government on some of the grey areas of the air crash episode, including an explanation, if possible, on why the cremation certificate was not in Netaji's name.

It is not necessary to go into the expense and paraphernalia of another Commission. All it requires is common sense and a will to close the messy chapter once and for all.

Needless to mention, there are almost irrefutable indications that Netaji died consequent to the plane crash and that the "mortal remains" at the Renko-ji temple are his. But I do not intend to thrust these upon anybody. All I urge is that we try and reach a national consensus and pay due respect to a departed soul - arguably one of the outstanding sons of India.

And I should like to emphasise that in making the proposal I am I seek no publicity for myself. Only, if desired, I am prepared to work behind the scene to proceed in the matter.

With best regards,

Yours sincerely,

Amu h 2

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TOP SECRET

PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE

- 1) The Cabinet had accepted the conclusions of the two Inquiry Committees of 1956 and 1970 that Netaji died in the air-crash in August 1945;

In February 1991, the CCPA had approved that no useful purpose would be served by holding yet another inquiry or by bringing the ashes into India.

- 2) In September 1994 PM had directed MHA to bring a paper for Cabinet's consideration on Netaji's death and the possibility of bringing his ashes to India, keeping in view that Netaji's birth centenary would be in January 1997. The Cabinet considered a paper on this subject in February 1995, and deferred a decision. (A copy of the note for the Cabinet is attached.)

- 3) The MEA does not have any Japanese report on their investigation into Netaji's death;

- 4) In January 1992, the Russian Government confirmed to our Embassy in Moscow that "as per data available in the Central and Republic Archives there is no information about the stay of the former President of the Indian National Congress Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose in the Soviet Union in 1945 and after that".

TOP SECRET

- 5) MEA has no records of the British Government stand, as reported by Shri Ray, in the late 1940's that Netaji did not die in the plane crash;
- 6) As to the point about the urn containing the ashes, MEA had reported earlier that the urn has never been x-rayed. There are some discrepancies about the dates on which the ashes believed to be Netaji's were seen by Col Habibur Rahman, Netaji's ADC. His two separate dispositions refer to a small piece of gold being seen among the ashes;

(It may be mentioned that it has been decided to establish a National Committee to commemorate Netaji's birth centenary and the Department of Culture has been asked to formulate a proposal for this.)
